

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 6686

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SP

SUBJECT: FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER AREILZA'S POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

REF: MADRID 6589

1. FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER AREILZA CAME TO SEE ME
IN SAN SEBASTIAN AUGUST 28 AND GIVE ME A RUNDOWN
ON HIS PRESENT POLITICAL ACTIVITIED.

2. AREILZA SAID THAT HE WAS CONVINCED THAT TIME
WOULD RUN OUT ON THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IF IT DID
NOT SOON COME FORWARD WITH A VIALBLE POLITICAL
PROGRAM. WHILE THERE HAD BEEN CONTACTS WITH THE
OPPOSITION, SO FAR NO AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED.
AREILZA THOUGH SUCH AGREEMENT INCREASINGLY DOUBTGUL
SINCE THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO HEAD IN THE
DIRECTION OF A REFERENDUM ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES
AND THEN MAKE CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES BY DECREE LAW.
MOREOVER, ITS ECONOMIC PROGRAM IS STILL GEARED TO
THE NOTION THAT STATE CAN DICTATE WHAT IS
BEST WITHOUT TAKING FULLY INTO ACCOUNT THE NEEDS AND
DEMANDS OF THE PEOPLE.

3. AREILZA SAID HE HAD BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE
CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS OF GIL ROBLES, WITH FELIPE
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GONZALEZ OF THE PSOE, AND HAD EVEN BEEN TO PARIS FOR

A TALK WITH SANTIAGO CARRILO. HE HAD ALSO HAD MEETINGS WITH FRAGA, HOWEVER HE SAID THAT FRAGA HAD MADE CLEAR THAT HIS POLITICAL CLIENTE WAS ON THE RIGHT AND THAT, THEREFORE HE MUST TAKE POSITIONS TO SATISFY THAT CLIENTE (WHICH IS INDEED EXACTLY WHAT FRAGA HAS BEEN DOING). AREILZA SAID THAT FRAGA IS STILL DESIROUS OF FORMING A PARTY, BUT HE (AREILZA) HAS NO SUCH INTERESTS. HE COMMENTED THAT HE HAS ONLY FOUR OR FIVE YEARS OF ACTIVE POLITICAL LIFE LEFT AND HE WANTED TO CONCENTRATE THAT IN TERMS OF BEING USEFUL TO THE STATE RATHER THAN ANY ONE POLITICAL FORMATION.

4. AREILZA SAID THAT IN HIS CONTACTS WITH VARIOUS POLITICAL LEADERS, HE HAS OUTLINED A PROGRAM WHICH HE SAID MET WITH GENERAL APPROVAL OF THOSE WITH WHOM HE HAD MET, INCLUDING SANTIAGO CARRILO. THE GENERAL IDEA WAS THAT THE OPPOSITION AND GENUINELY REFORMIST ELEMENTS SHOULD REACH AN AGREEMENT OR PACT ON THE TYPE OF CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM THEY WISHED TO ACHIEVE IN ORDER TO INSTALL DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN. THERE SHOULD ALSO BE AGREEMENT ON THE TYPE OF ELECTORAL LAW. ON THE ECONOMIC SIDE. THERE SHOULD BE A PACT "ON A ECONOMIC MODEL FOR SPAIN" WHICH WOULD MAKE POSSIBLE A FORM OF "WELFARE" STATE TO MEET THE BASIC NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE FOR HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION, SCHOOLS HEALTH CARE, ETC. IT WAS NO LONGER POSSIBLE TO DEAL WITH ECONOMIC MATTERS AS THE "TECHNOCRATS " HAD DONE IN THE SIXTHIES.

5. WITH THIS BROAD AGREEMENT, THEN THE KING SHOULD CALL FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS FOR A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WHICH WOULD THEN DRAW UP THE NEW CONSTITUTION. AREILZA SAID THAT IF SUAREZ WERE WILLING TO CARRY OUT SUCH A PROGRAM, THIS WOULD BE FINE, BUT HE CLEARLY IMPLIED THAT HE THOUGH SUAREZ WAS NEITHER WILLING NOR ABLE TO DO SO. IT WAS EQUALLY CLEAR THAT HE (AREILZA) SAW HIMSELF AS THE ONLY VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO REACHING UNDERSTANDING WITH OPPOSITION AND OTHER GENUINELY REFORMIST ELEMENTS.

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6. AREILZA TOLD ME THAT HE WOULD SHORTLY RETURN TO MADRID IN ORDER TO TRY TO PERSUADE THE COORDINADOR DEMOCRATICA, IN ITS IMPORTANT MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 4, NOT TO ISSUE SOME RADICAL DOCUMENT BUT RATHER TO COME UP WITH A DOCUMENT OF A MODERATE NATURE ALONG THE LINES OF HIS PROPOSALS WHICH COULD SERVE AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE COURSE ON WHICH THE PRESENT SUAREZ GOVERNMENT SEEMS TO BE

EMBARKING. IF THE COORDINADORA DEMOCRATIC SHOULD ADOPT A MODERATE LINE, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO PAY CAREFUL ATTENTION.

7. AREILZA DID NOT DISCUSS HIS RELATIONS WITH THE KING AT THIS TIME, BUT HE DID MAKE THE OBSERVATION WHICH CONFIRMS OUR PREVIOUS THINKING, THAT HAD THE KING TAKEN HIMSELF, FRAGA AND GARRIGUES INTO HIS CONFIDENCE SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE THE ARIAS DISMISSAL THEY MIGHT WELL HAVE BEEN WILLING TO STAY ON UNDER SUAREZ. AREILZA ADDED THAT HE WOULD HAVE HAD NO PROBLEM WORKING UNDER SUAREZ BUT THE FACT THAT HE HAD BEEN CUT OUT OF THE PROCESS HAD MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO GO ON. HE REPEATED WHAT HE HAD TOLD ME BEFORE (AND FOR WHICH WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION) THAT AT THE LAST MINUTE HE HAD BEEN OFFERED A VICE PRESIDENCY IN THE GOVERNMENT AND SEVERAL MINISTRIES. AREILZA DID MAKE SOME FRIENDLY REMARKS ABOUT THE KING'S FATHER AND SAID THAT HE HAD RECENTLY SENT HIM A PAPER AT HIS REQUEST ON THE PRESENT SITUATION.

8. REGARDING THE MILITARY AREILZA EXPRESSED THE BELIEF THAT THEY WOULD NOT OBJECT TO HIS PROPOSALS FOR A POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC. THEIR MAIN CONCERN WAS FOR THE UNITY OF THE COUNTRY AND FOR CONTINUED PUBLIC ORDER. HIS PROGRAM WOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT EITHER IN FACT, QUITE TO THE CONTRARY. AREILZA NOTED THAT THE FOUR MILITARY MINISTERS HAD RARELY SAID ANYTHING AT THE CABINET MEETINGS AND DID NOT SEEM TO OBJECT TO THE GENERAL NOTION OF DEMOCRATIC REFORM. HE REFERRED TO THEM AS "THE FOUR OWLS" WATCHING OVER EVERYTHING WITH LARGE STARING EYES. WITH ONLY AN OCCASIONAL HOOT.

9. FINALLY, AREILZA SAID HE THOUGHT IT WAS A MISTAKE
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FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO KEEP LA PASIONARIA AND SANTIAGO CARRILO OUT OF SPAIN. IF THEY HAD BEEN ADMITTED, THEY SOON WOULD HAVE LOST THEIR APPEAL AND WOULD HAVE BECOME VIRTUALLY NON PERSONS. BY KEEPING THEM OUT, THE MYTHS REMAINED STRONG.

10. COMMENT: AREILZA'S COMMENTS CLOSELY COINCIDE WITH WHAT HE TOLD ME IN JULY THAT INTENDED TO SET ABOUT DEVELOPING AN ALTERNATIVE POLITICAL PROGRAM IN ORDER TO BE READY TO PICK UP THE PIECES WHEN SUAREZ AND HIS FRIENDS FALTERED. HE, OF COURSE SPEAKS SUBJECTIVELY AND IT IS BY NO MEANS CERTAIN, AS INDICATED IN REFTEL, THAT ALL THE GROUPS WITH WHOM HE HAS SPOKEN SUPPORT HIS POINT OF VIEW. HOWEVER, HE IS CONVINCED THAT HE STILL HAS A CHANCE TO BE PRIME MINISTER AND HE

CAN BE EXPECTED TO PURSUE HIS PROPOSALS WITH HIS
CUSTOMARY ENERGY.
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